

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A magnetic recording medium, comprising  
a lower non-magnetic layer containing at least a non-magnetic powder and a binder resin on one surface of a non-magnetic support,  
an upper magnetic layer containing at least a ferromagnetic powder and a binder resin on the lower non-magnetic layer, and  
a back coat layer on the other surface of the non-magnetic support, wherein  
the thickness of the upper magnetic layer is within the range from 0.03 to 0.30  $\mu\text{m}$ ,  
the AFM surface roughness  $R_a$  of the upper magnetic layer is 6 nm or less,  
the number of concavities with a depth of 30 nm or greater in the surface of the upper magnetic layer is 5 per 1  $\text{cm}^2$  of surface area or less, and

the magnetic recording medium is formed by a process comprising:

a step A of forming a lower non-magnetic layer by applying a non-magnetic layer coating containing at least a non-magnetic powder and a binder resin onto one surface of a non-magnetic support and subsequently drying and curing the non-magnetic layer coating;

a step B of forming an upper magnetic layer by applying a magnetic layer coating containing at least a ferromagnetic powder and a binder resin onto the lower non-magnetic layer and subsequently drying the magnetic layer coating;

a step C of forming a back coat layer by applying a back coat layer coating onto another surface of the non-magnetic support and subsequently drying the back coat layer coating; and

a step D of performing calendering following completion of both the step A and the step C.

Claim 2 (Original): The magnetic recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the average major axis length of the ferromagnetic powder is 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  or less.

Claim 3 (Original): The magnetic recording medium according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the medium is used in a recording and reproducing system in which the minimum recording wavelength is 0.6  $\mu\text{m}$  or shorter.

Claim 4 (Canceled)